

Senate File 498 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 498

BY BOLKCOM

A BILL FOR

1 An Act establishing a meatpacking industry workers bill of
2 rights.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 84A.12 Meatpacking industry workers
2 bill of rights — duties and authority of coordinator.

3 1. The position of meatpacking industry worker rights
4 coordinator is established within the division of labor
5 services and under the direction and control of the labor
6 commissioner. The coordinator shall be appointed by the
7 governor and serve at the pleasure of the governor. Preference
8 shall be given to applicants for the coordinator position who
9 are fluent in the Spanish language.

10 2. The duties of the coordinator shall be to inspect and
11 review the practices and procedures of meatpacking operations
12 in this state as they relate to the provision of the Iowa
13 meatpacking industry worker bill of rights, which rights are
14 outlined as follows:

15 a. The right to organize as protected by chapter 731.

16 b. The right to a safe workplace.

17 c. The right to adequate facilities and the opportunity to
18 use them.

19 d. The right to complete information.

20 e. The right to understand the information provided.

21 f. The right to existing state and federal benefits and
22 rights.

23 g. The right to be free from discrimination.

24 h. The right to continuing training, including training of
25 supervisors.

26 i. The right to compensation for work performed.

27 j. The right to seek state help.

28 3. The coordinator and the coordinator's designated
29 representatives shall have access to all meatpacking operations
30 in this state at any time meatpacking products are being
31 processed and industry workers are on the job.

32 4. The coordinator may issue a subpoena to compel any
33 person to appear, give sworn testimony, or produce documentary
34 or other evidence relevant to the duties of the coordinator
35 authorized under this section. If any person subpoenaed

1 refuses to produce the records, books, or papers, the
2 coordinator may apply to the district court having jurisdiction
3 over that person for the enforcement of the subpoena.

4 5. The coordinator may receive complaints and make
5 referrals to appropriate government agencies as necessary to
6 enforce the provisions of this section.

7 6. The commissioner shall provide necessary office space,
8 furniture, equipment, and supplies as well as necessary
9 assistance for the coordinator.

10 7. The coordinator shall, on or before December 1 of each
11 year, submit a report to the members of the general assembly
12 and the governor regarding any actions the coordinator deems
13 necessary or appropriate to provide for the fair treatment of
14 workers in the meatpacking industry.

15 EXPLANATION

16 This bill establishes a meatpacking industry workers bill of
17 rights. The bill creates a position of meatpacking industry
18 worker rights coordinator within the division of labor services
19 of the department of workforce development to be appointed by
20 the governor and who shall grant preference to Spanish-speaking
21 applicants. The bill grants to the coordinator the right to
22 inspect and review the practices and procedures of meatpacking
23 operations to ensure specific rights of meatpacking workers as
24 enumerated in the bill. The coordinator is granted access to
25 all meatpacking operations in Iowa, may issue subpoenas, compel
26 testimony or documentary evidence, and enforce the subpoenas
27 in district court. The coordinator may receive complaints,
28 make referrals to government agencies, and must make an annual
29 report to the general assembly and governor. Office space,
30 equipment, and general direction and control shall be provided
31 by the labor commissioner although the coordinator serves at
32 the pleasure of the governor.